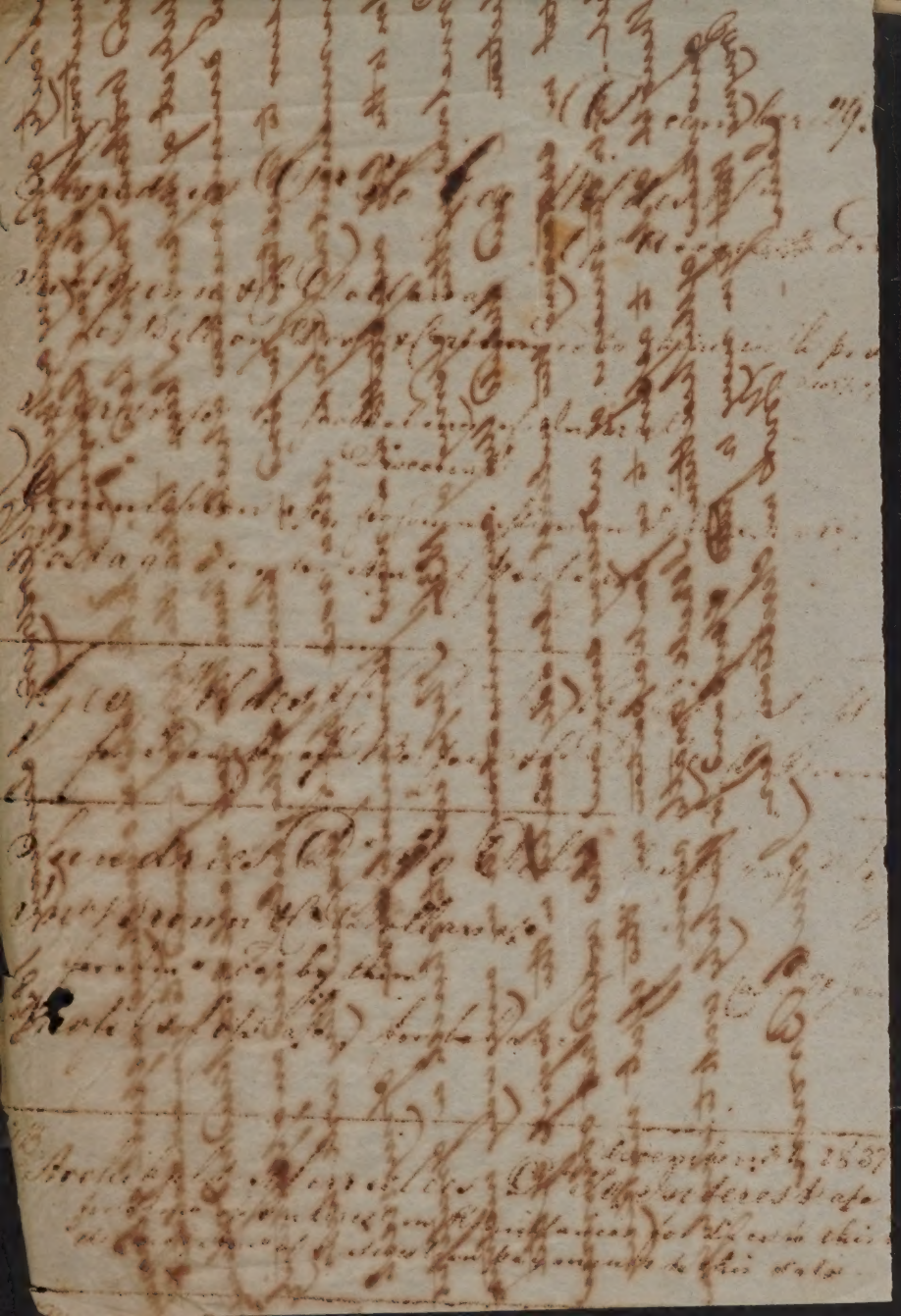
Petersburg 1 January 1838

To the Society of Inquiry a Theological Seminary
in Princetown New Jersey

Beloved brethren in the Lord! — With the hope of cherishing a spirit of inquiry
which by the set of Providence I have taken the liberty to forward to you an abstract
of some communication which I have this day made to a Friend of yours
in answer to questions proposed — Several of the facts I had an opportunity
of communicating to you viva voce — but I presume they will not
therefore be the less acceptable in a more permanent form — Of my visit
to Princeton in the Spring of 1836 I hope ever to cherish a grateful
recollection — and should the communications be in any way instrumental
in sustaining the interest already excited in the progress of the
Gospel — or be the means of arousing some one who did not otherwise
have thought of the to aspire to a participation in the effort making
for the conversion of the heathen I shall greatly rejoice
praying that you may be guided & upheld and for the holy work to which you
are given — Yours in Christian love John C Brown



The Greek Church of Russia is strictly evangelical in her sentiments. "There are few of them" says Dr Pinkerton speaking of the Russian people generally, "that are of age who have not learned to repeat the Lord's prayer, and many also the creed; and who on being questioned, would not reply that they are sinners – that sin is a transgression of the Law of God – that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – that he died on the cross to redeem us – that we must pray for the pardon of our sins for his sake – that at death, the soul goes to Heaven or hell and that Christ will come at the resurrection to judge the world;" but notwithstanding this the ignorance that prevails is deplorable.

Shortly before my visit to England & America, I was travelling with a friend, who enquired of the Izvoshick, (sledge driver) if he could read. Finding that he could not, we enquired if there were no school in his village; but the poor man did not know what a school was. We explained to him the nature of a school, when recollecting himself, he said he had heard, that there was something of that kind, in a village about 100 miles from the place where he was born, but he had never seen any. We next asked him concerning the Bible, but he knew not what it was. We in like manner explained to him, what kind of a book it was; but he said he had never heard before of such a book; nor did he think that any of his fellow villagers possessed a copy of it. "We are all," said he, "dark people. But there is a Priest living in our village, & if you

go and ask him, he will in all probability be able to give you the information you desire." Finding his ignorance so great, we asked him: Do you know that there is a God?" Oh yes" said he quickly "I worship the whole of them" In the opinion of this poor man, all the Saints of the Kalendar were equals of the one true & living God. The Priests, and the more intelligent part of the community consider such sentiments blasphemous, and say that when they do pray to Saints, they only ask them to intercede and pray to God for them; but it is easy to prove that many of the Peasants do look upon the Saints as Gods, and the equals if not the rivals of Jehovah —
Two of my friends, Dr. L. & H. travelling some years since in the south of Russia, entered into conversation on the subject of religion with the Hostess of one of the Posthouses. She seemed to acquiesce in all they said, and to shew them her undimited charity said: "You know there is only one God, and we all worship the same God. We Russians, & you Foreigners, the Mahommedans, and that Calmuck, (an idolater) all worship one God — St. Nicholas is our God". —
It were no less easy to prove that while the Priests, and those who have enjoyed the advantages of education, do not consider that the pictures before which their worship is always presented, are Gods; but employ them merely as helps to devotion, many of the Peasantry do consider them to be Gods. The same friends ~~of~~ I have referred to above, had taken up their quarters for the night at one of the Posthouses but as any travellers may enter them without ceremony, they were disturbed in their slumbers by a Stranger entering their apartment. He went as usual to the corner of the room in which the

picture is usually suspended, and as soon as the Jeans caught his eye, he began his prayers, but had not continued long engaged in these, when he stopped short, exclaiming: "If there is no God, we need not pray, when there is no God, we can not pray. Very true thought my friends, but why conclude that there is no God. This they could not discover, until the dawn revealed to them the cause of the exclamation. The man had come from the open air, where all the light of the moon and stars was reflected by the pure snow, into an apartment comparatively dark. He knew where the picture was likely to be, and seeing the Jeans commenced his prayers, but as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness of the room, he discovered that the picture had been removed, and only the Jeans remained in its place.) To such is the ignorance prevailing in a land nominally Christian, what must be the state of those who know nothing of Christianity! Of this, intercourse with Missionary Brethren who have proceeded hence, bearing with them the glad tidings of Salvation to the benighted sons of Mongolia, has enabled me to form some idea. Their vices, and immoralities I could not better describe, than in the language of St Paul, when describing the heathen of his day - passing those things, of which it seems a shame even to speak ~~of~~, I might describe them as dead to natural affection, and consequently dead to all the enjoyments resulting from the play of the affections. There is an individual, now it is to be hoped an enquirer after truth, who was so addicted to gambling, that after staking, and losing the whole of his cattle and possessions at play, he staked his only son, and losing, gave him up a slave. There is another known to the Missionaries, who after losing all his property by gaming, borrowed the sheep skin covering of his aged father on some pretext, and staking, lost it

and left his father unprotected from the severity of the cold, robbed and cheated by his own son. And as for conjugal affection, it is by no means uncommon when a husband and wife quarrel, for the latter, as soon as her husband has left the house, to flee to the nearest Priest of the Greek Church, and request to be immediately baptized. The Priest will in all probability, desire her to wait, for he knows that in a short time, she will be followed by her husband. He returns to his house, & finding his wife absent, concludes at once that she has gone to the Priest, to whom he also directs his steps, and enquiring for his wife, learns that she is there. 'Is she baptized' he enquires with earnestness. 'No' is the reply of the Priest. 'Well then' I'll give you a cow or two sheep, if you will not baptize her. 'Oh replies' the Priest 'I am just preparing to baptize her, I can not refuse,' but let me see, if you will give me four sheep I will not do it.' In this way frequently several hours will be spent, haggling with him respecting the poor woman, about the sum to be paid to prevent her being baptized. But why the desire of baptism on her part? it will be asked, is she convinced of the truth of Christianity? 'Oh no.' but she has learned, that according to the Laws of the Empire, no authority can be exercised by a Pagan, over a Christian, and once baptized, should her husband maltreat her, she may leave him whenever she pleases. And why is he so desirous of preventing her baptism? Is it conjugal affection? No! No! It is a more mercenary consideration by which he is actuated. If his wife leave him, he must purchase another, and which the Priest might be induced by the bribe of two or three sheep to refuse baptism, another wife would cost him, five or six. Why does the Priest here

take to baptize? Does he suspect the motives of the woman? No! he knows it, he knows all, and only delays that he may make as advantageous a bargain for himself as he can.

Within these few days I have received a letter from Siberia, from which I make the following extracts.

Our daily service which consists of reading, and expounding the Scriptures, singing, and prayer, is continued as usual. The attendance varies. Seldom more than thirty are present, and often fewer than that number. As few of this small number, attend purely from a love of the truth, it often happens that I have more hearers on a week day, than on the Sabbath: as on the latter day they know they cannot transact any business with us, which is frequently the chief end they have in view in attending. This, whatever be their motives seems to urge upon us the duty of being "instant in season & out of season". We have many deplorable examples of the hardness, and insensibility of the hearts of the Heathen. I lately saw this in a very striking and affecting manner, in the case of a poor old man, aged 66, who had frequently heard, and read the word of truth. Learning that he was ill, I went to see him, and on my last visit, a few days before his death, although perfectly sensible, his whole thoughts and attention were engaged on the subject of his burial, (and) whether I would not give him some linen to wrap his body in, and some boards to make his coffin. The attention which he would give, to what I said about his deathless part, was most forced: and often listening for a few moments, he would interrupt me with "the linen" & "the boards". His soul, he said, God would care for, the body was his only concern. It was a truly affecting scene,

and two of our pious young men, whom I took with me, were deeply impressed with what they said, and heard. So strong did the ruling passion of the Bonaes "give, give," appear even on death, that after I had left him, only a few moments before, he forever closed his eyes upon all earthly scenes, he desired his wife to come to me, and say, that "he had died in our faith" and hoped that I would take the charge of his funeral.— A few days after this, I met with another old man, upwards of 70, who told me he had heard that I had given linen, to the old man, above mentioned, and as he was an old man and expected soon to die, he hoped I would do the same for him. I scarcely need say, that I embraced the opportunity to exhort him, to attend to the infinitely more important concerns of his soul; but alas! with apparently no good effect. Another, at whose house, I was accustomed to speak to a few people, who attended to hear, before my visit to Europe, came to me in the summer, when I proposed doing as I had before done. He hesitated, feared the trouble would be too great for me, that scarcely any would attend &c. I told him that I would die to that, if he would only consent to receive me into his tent. He still hesitated, and as I had every reason to believe, that what he had said were only vain excuses, I pressed him to tell me the truth. He acknowledged that he feared opposition, and persecution, from his neighbours, and others. I reminded him whom he had rather to fear—that he must soon appear before him, to be judged according to the things done in the body &c. About a month ago, I learnt that he was ill, and even

vited I went to see him. He was apparently labouring under the influences of an apoplectic fit. I bled him, administered medicines &c. I wished to do something better for him, but it was too late – although he continued nearly 72 hours, after he was first taken ill I visited him frequently, yet he never opened his eyes, spoke, or appeared at all sensible of what was taking place around him. He had heard much, understood much, and at one time appeared to be halting between two opinions, but there is reason to fear, rejected the counsel of God against himself. — While such things lead us to lament their hardness of heart, and unbelief, they are also calculated to produce jealousy, and searchings of heart in us, and to produce the enquiry whether nothing has been lacking on our part – whether we have done all that we might have done to induce them to embrace the Gospel and "if thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity who shall stand."

Extract of a letter from Mr Stoddy Knap"

Perhaps I may be reminded that cases of ignorance & depravity equally deplorable, are to be met with in lands the most distinguished for Christian privileges. I know it, but it is to be hoped that there they are the exceptions, in Heathen countries they are the predominating case. We read that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, of which numerous illustrations might be given. Many in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges, seem to think and speak of God, as he were altogether such an one as themselves, but by the Heathen he is degraded below the level of humanity. "In him," says an Apostle, addressing the Heathen, "we live, & move, & have our being, as certain also of your own Poets have said – "For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch as we are the offspring of

God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold, or Silver, or Stone, graven by ~~the~~ art & man's device. But those of whom I speak, have gone farther astray than even they to whom these words were addressed. They were originally Shamans, and worshipped the Tengri, or powers of the air. When any one amongst them is sick, they conclude that one of these Tengri must be displeased with him, and is seeking his life, and they conceive that if they can but deceive him, the Patient will recover. To deceive the God the following expedient is adopted. A quantity of straw, is dressed in the habiliments of the sufferer, and brought to the side of his couch. It is laid in his place while he is dexterously removed, some one then approaches with a knife, and stabs the man of straw, after which it is removed and cast into a fire outside of the tent; the infatuated Idolaters, imagining that by this means the God will be completely deceived, and being fully avenged as he supposes, his attention will be directed elsewhere, and the sufferer will recover. If he should not recover all that can be said, is that the God has been through the trick, and had not been deceived.

Again, ~~in~~ worship, to pray, would be too much trouble. In presenting their supplications they adopt the following plan. A number of petitions are written out on paper, and wound on a cylinder which is inserted into a cylindrical ~~circular~~ case, about the size of a drum. To one of the ends of the cylinder which projects, a short handle is affixed by which it is turned round, and the prayers being then put in motion, it is expected they will be answered by their god. Frequently an aged individual may be seen, keeping this revolving for

a length of time, by means of a cord, the other end of which is attached to the handle of the praying machine, thus presenting prayers to God who cannot leave. — Machines of a similar description, but much larger, are kept in their temple, for the use of those who go thither to worship. But for many, even this is too laborious, and they fasten a number of scrolls of paper on a cord, as the tail of a boy's kite is made, and hanging these on a tree, leave it to the wind to put them in motion, and present their prayers. I do not like to attempt to ~~[illegible]~~ decide upon the ~~[illegible]~~ fate of the Heathen, but consider that while the declaration of Scripture is: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," the very ~~possibility~~ possibility of their being finally lost, ought to give a restless force to the command of our Savior "Go and preach to all nations". His command has as yet received but an imperfect attention, from those entrusted with the duty of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Of all the topics introduced into the pulpit-address, perhaps few have given occasion for such heart-stirring appeals. Now the auditory have had their feelings harrowed up by the details of Heathen suffering, and now their hearts filled with hope while they listened to the ~~[illegible]~~ prospect of success, but still little, very little is done. The orator's power is discussed, but his call "come over and help us" is forgotten. You who are seeking to qualify yourselves for the discharge of duties the most awfully responsible which can devolve upon them, let me entreat you to pause before you decide upon the post which you shall occupy. Think on that day, when about to close your eyes upon the things of time, when every thing terrestrial shall be seen in its

in its true importance. Think of the wants of the world — of the millions who know not, & cannot know that ever they may be Saved. Think of the completeness of that plan, devised for the salvation of our race — Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be Saved, however sunk in ignorance, however sunk in depravity & vice, however entangled in the meshes of superstition, and bound by Idolatry's chain, however darkened his understanding, and desperately wicked his heart — let him call on the name of the Lord, & before it can be told to the impatient hosts who wait with harps attuned to tell the joyful tidings, "Now he's safe, Behold he prays," a ray of Heavenly light will have entered the darkened mind, and quickened into life the soul long dead in trespasses & sins. Yes, this, and more than this would follow his cry for pardon, But how can they call on him of whom they ~~have~~ not ~~heard~~ believe. & how can they believe in him, of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear without a preacher? The Spirit and the Bride say come. Let then him that hears, devote his feeble strength to carry further the joyful invitation, "come" & be it yours to carry far thence those glad tidings of great joy, which constitute the sole foundation of a Sinner's hope. Think of the miseries the Heathen do, & must endure, until the truth shall set them free. Enslaved by sin, them fettled by spirits, led their Captive & deceiver has secured his prey, them now are bound both hands & feet, no one able to save himself, or deliver his brother. Beneath the grasp of the fetters, by which they are bound, their mental faculties have shrunk till

now they are powerless and dead. They have given themselves up to their fate, and under the degrading & debasing influence of sin, have lost their voice for ~~freedom~~ prayer. Sr. Listen to the cry of lamentation, weeping and woe, which unceasingly ascends from the land of darkness, listen, ye who joyfully anticipate a time when first permitted to ascend the sacred desk, you hope to tell, in language which of old a Prophet used "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Listen to the cry of the oppressed, and say, whither should you bend your steps & where lift up your voice, if you would serve with faithfulness your day & generation.

Before you decide, think of the spot where laborers are most required. In Christian lands, there is apparently considerable competition to obtain a pulpit & a charge. Look to those who have carried the banner of the cross into Heathen lands — see they faint, they yield, they rally, they struggle, they cry for your aid, cry with the earnestness of dying men "We sink, we sink, come over and help us" They see their inadequacy to the work. They know that is with God to save by many or by few; but they know that he employs

the instrumentality of men in the prosecution of the work, and they feel that a small accession to their force, would greatly increase their success. The forts they attack begin to totter under their repeated assaults, but they fear that without an accession of strength, they cannot effect an overthrow. They cry to the Lord, and cry to those, with whom while preparing for the service of the Lord, they were wont to take sweet counsel, and whose zeal, they know to be deeply interested in the work of missions, but they send them all to sound, that they do not see it their duty, to hasten personally to their friends. They look next to you, considering your present vocation a pledge that wherever the Lord may require you to go, you are ready to spend & be spent for him. But their cry for aid has done so little to induce others to follow their steps, that they almost fear to ask, but still they look, they look imploringly. Tell of what the Lord is doing in Heathen lands, but forget not, much remains to be done, & if the Heathen perish, Christians alone are in fault, for they do not tell them that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish but have everlasting life. Something has been done, but nothing commensurate with the wants of the world. It is not for us to point to the banner of the cross, waving over many & far distant lands, & associate in the thought that now our Saviour begins to see of the travail of his soul, & be satisfied. Satisfied! what Satisfied, while in these same lands iniquity abounds Satisfied while the crescent still in many a spot surmounts the cross? While the smoke of the Littee still stains the sky? while many who call themselves by the name of Christ, are so sunk in superstition and idolatry that they are scarcely to be distinguished from the Heathen

amongst whom they dwell? No. Christians may be la-
bored, but Christ is not. Was not for this he left his
Father's throne; was not for this he bled; t was not for
this he died. The Heathen were promised him for his
inheritance, & the uttermost part of the Earth for a pos-
session. Look abroad, my Brethren, see there is still
much land to be possessed. Who then will advance to
take possession in his Prince's name? The battle is
not yours, but God's, & he will supply accoutrements,
strength, and courage for the war, who then will come
to the help of the Lord against the mighty?

I speak not to him who under the influence of enthu-
siasm & excitement, is ready to bid adieu to his home,
not to him, who fearing to live & die unknown to fame,
hopes by engaging in the missionary enterprize, to see
his name enrolled amongst the Captains of the host.
but to those who can calmly and coolly count the
cost, who doing so, count wealth, & influence, & fame,
as the small dust of the balance, who seek not the
honour which cometh for men, but that which cometh
from above, counting it a small matter to be judged
of man, or of man's judgement, seeing he who judg-
eth is God. These would we point to millions of our
fellow creatures inhabiting the lands of cruelty, where dark-
ness covereth the People, bowing down to Stocks & Stones
worshipping devils, changing the glory of the incorruptible
God, into an image made like unto corruptible man
& to birds, & to four footed beasts, & to creeping things.
Do you not profess to believe that there is no other
name under Heaven given among men, whereby they
can be saved, but one; will you not, then make an
effort to save them? A time is coming, when it will
be no longer necessary for any man to teach his brother
saying "Know the Lord" for all shall know him, from

the least soon to the greatest; but when shall it be? Had we the assurance, that but a few years could possibly elapse before its advent, still the state of the world would call for immediate effort; for before this year shall close, millions of those of whom we now speak will be in eternity; and if lost, what will it profit them that their decendants shall be saved? Who would dwell with devouring fire? Who would with everlasting burning?—

J. L. B.